

What is a Good Student? A Cross-cultural Comparison

by

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Abstract

Increasingly, students are being taught by teachers who do not share their cultural assumptions and expectations. Native-speaker teachers are common for students of English in Japan and for students of Japanese in Australia. The gap in expectations between teachers and students can create difficulties where communication is most important: in the classroom. Following our investigation of the concept students have of a "good teacher," we have turned our attention to their concept of a "good student."

The concept was defined via a questionnaire which was administered to groups of university students in Japan and in Australia. The questionnaire, which was drawn up using categories suggested by students from the two cultures, covered aspects of students' attitudes, abilities, personality and behaviour.

Comparison of results for the two different cultures show several areas in which student expectations differ. Clearly, those who teach across cultures will benefit from being aware of these differences.